

Unknown

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Summary: After events at the end of season 6, Daryl is back in Alexandria but things aren't all they seem.

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A/N This came about after a TV interview I saw with Scott Gimple, Robert Kirkman and Norman Reedus. In it a woman asked if there would ever be a Daryl shower scene. Laughing, Kirkman replied there would be two next season and Unchained Melody would be playing in the background. It was suddenly remembering the movie, Ghost, using this song that inspired this one shot.

That and several conversations with Lizziekat15, thanks to her for all the support. Take a few minutes to go and read her wonderful works - When 2 Worlds Collide, Lioness and Dual Archers.

Please read and review and I hope you enjoy it - once again warning of major character death.

Unknown

The last of his filthy clothes hit the floor in the steam filled bathroom. Even he realized they were beyond saving, stiff from an accumulation of dirt, sweat and blood, both his own from the gunshot to his shoulder and from the multiple walkers he'd put down in the last few days.

He opened the cubicle door and stepped inside, letting the hot water cascade over his tired body, watching impassively as the swirling liquid at his feet turned red before disappearing down the drain. He hadn't realized just how much blood he'd lost from his injury and wondered briefly how bad it had looked to the others as they'd knelt in front of that lunatic with the baseball bat wrapped in barbed wire.

With a frown he suddenly registered he had no memory of getting from that clearing in the forest to the warmth and security of his home in Alexandria, no memory of what had happened to his friends. He shrugged it off as he reached for the only shampoo in the cubicle, hoping he wasn't going to come out of this smelling of coconut or some other girly shit.

He guessed he'd passed out from blood loss at some point and been carried back and made a note to find out who he needed to be grateful to for getting his sorry ass to safety. He threw his head back and let the water sluice over him, washing the lather from his hair, watching as several unidentifiable objects were washed away.

Leaning forward he rested his forehead on the tiled surface as he twisted the shower controller, increasing the temperature to as hot as he could bear, relishing the feel of the near scalding water as it pummelled his sore shoulders and back, washing away a lifetime's worth of tension and pain.

A glance at his right shoulder revealed that the bullet hole was healing well, in fact much faster than he could have imagined and he briefly wondered how long he'd been out of it. A sudden flash of memory had him seeing a bat being raised, an insane grin on a stranger's face and hearing screams but it was gone again before he could understand what he was seeing.

As he reached for a washcloth and soap he felt a brief chill against his back, heard the cubicle door shut softly as the slight figure slipped in behind him. Delicate hands reached around his body, plucking the items from his hands.

"Let me"

Her voice was as gentle as he remembered and he swallowed hard as she began to run the now soapy cloth over his back, tenderly washing away the dirt, her touch butterfly soft as she traced over the scars there.

Once she was finished the now grubby cloth dropped to the floor and her slim arms wrapped around his middle as she pressed against him, her cheek pressed between his shoulder blades.

"I'm sorry" she whispered as she clung to him "but you'll be okay now, there'll be no more pain and you'll finally be able to rest"

Finally he turned to face her, unsure why he felt no embarrassment or awkwardness at their intimate closeness, why it felt so right to have her in his arms. He rested his chin on the crown of her head and they stood locked together, not speaking, the only sound, other than the running water, her humming softly to herself. The tune was familiar but he was unable to remember it's title.

"What's that song?" He asked as the water ran cold and they stepped out of the cubicle, wrapping each other in thick fluffy towels.

"Unchained Melody" she told him "it was one of my Mama's favorites"

As they dried off and dressed in the clean clothes she'd laid out for them, knowing he would have forgotten to bring some into the bathroom for himself, he studied her.

The ugly scars on her cheek and forehead were somehow all but gone and her long blonde hair hung damply down her back in softly curling waves, that familiar braid still in place and when she caught him staring her face lit up in the dazzling smile he knew so well, her large blue eyes gleaming as she met his gaze.

"I don't get it, how can you be here?" He asked, his confusion evident and her smile faded.

"I think it's best I show you"

She took his hand and led him through the house and into the silent streets, towards the secluded, private area at the back of the town.

He saw his friends, huddled together in a close group set away from the Alexandrians that were gathered nearby. Maggie had her head buried against Glenn's chest, her body shaking as he held her tight, seemingly oblivious to the tears on his own face as he comforted his sobbing wife. Michonne was alongside them, her arm wrapped around Carl as he held Judith close to his chest, his expression hard and angry as he stared directly ahead, refusing to look at anyone. Michonne's usually stern features were twisted in grief as she fought to stay strong for the boy next to her. Abraham and Sasha stood side by side, hands clasped as they stood silently, Rosita and Eugene nearby, all with downcast eyes and defeated posture.

His eyes frantically searched the gathering.

"Where is she?" He asked desperately "where's Carol?"

"She left, but don't worry, she's fine" Her calm voice reassured him "she was hurt but Morgan found her in time. She's safe now, he's a good man, he'll take care of her" She took his hand again.

"You don't have to worry about any of them anymore" she said gently.

Still not understanding what was happening his eyes drifted to the grieving group again, this time settling on the man he considered his closest friend, his brother.

Rick stood alone, his head lowered as he looked into the open grave at his feet, his expression that of a broken man, his shoulders trembling with silent sobs, his eyes dead as he lifted the shovel and began to fill the hole, refusing any offer of help.

She released his hand as he slowly made his way forward, confused when no one acknowledged his presence. He reached the edge of the grave and stared down at the body laid out there. The familiar once white blanket covering it was now stained and dirty, the dirt begining to cover it failing to hide the fact that one end was totally drenched in blood.

"You ...

Are ...

It .â€|!"

At once the memories came hurtling back, kneeling with the others, helpless on a cold forest floor, the leather jacket clad madman, the barbed wire covered bat pointed at his face, a rambled speech about feeding Carl's other eye to Rick and then a blinding pain.

The voice again, a hint of amusement in it this time

"Taking it like a champ!"

Then more pain before nothing but blackness.

He swayed on his feet as the realization hit him.

"Shit!" He muttered and she was at his side again, wrapping her slender arms around him for support.

"It doesn't look like it now but your death makes them determined, they fight back, they find allies to help them and they win"

She gave him a small smile,

"Their love for you and losing you makes them strong enough to survive" She took both his hands in hers and pulled him to face her.

"It's time for you to go now"

She turned, steering him from the graveside. As she lead him away he stopped, turning for one last, long look at the people he called his family.

She waited patiently until he was ready and finally he reached out and took her hand again, a feeling of peace stealing over him, his body no longer weary and hurting as he looked into her tender face.

"C'mon then" he smirked at her "We goin' or what?"

With another soft smile she moved away and he followed her into the unknown.

END

Thanks for reading, please let me know what you thought, Constructive crit is also more than welcome as every comment helps me improve.

**I'm not convinced that Daryl will be the one to die in the show and in no way do I think Beth will be there if he is the one chosen. I swore I would never do a Beth ghost/spirit type story but it seemed right for this one. **

I actually have no preference between seeing Beth or Carol paired with Daryl, I just write what feels best for the story I'm working on. However, I do feel Beth is a little young which is why I couldn't bring myself to do a smutty shower sex scene. Sorry!

End
file.